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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5124th meeting of the Security Council, held on 16 February 2005, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation between Iraq and Kuwait", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council congratulates the people of Iraq on the successful elections of 30 January 2005. These elections represent a historic moment for Iraq and a positive step in its political transition. In turning out to the polls, Iraqis demonstrated their respect for the rule of law and non-violence. They voted for democracy and full ownership of their affairs. The Security Council commends the Iraqi people for having taken this step to exercise their right to freely determine their own political future and encourages them to continue to do so in moving ahead with their political transition.

"The Security Council congratulates the newly-elected coalitions and individuals in these elections.

"The elections took place under difficult conditions, and the Security Council salutes the bravery of the Iraqi people who demonstrated their commitment to democracy, defying the terrorists. The Security Council commends the tens of thousands of Iraqis who ran as candidates, administered the elections, staffed the polls, observed the elections, and provided security. The Security Council gives special recognition to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq for its fortitude and organizational skill in administering the elections.

"The Security Council commends the Secretary-General and the United Nations for successfully assisting election preparations, including advice and support extended to the Iraqis by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq Ashraf Qazi, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), particularly the lead electoral adviser Carlos Valenzuela, the UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) and its Director Carina Perelli. The Security Council also appreciates the assistance given by other international actors, including EU electoral experts.

"The Security Council also notes the commendable role played by the Iraqi Security Forces and the Multi-National Forces-Iraq in providing security to the elections.

"These elections are an important step for Iraq's political transition, as outlined in UN Security Council resolution 1546. The Security Council looks forward to the seating of the Transitional National Assembly and the formation

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of a new Transitional Government of Iraq in the near future. A Constitution of Iraq, to be drafted under the authority of the Transitional National Assembly, is expected to be put to a referendum by October 2005 and followed by general elections by December 2005 under the new Constitution. The Security Council affirms its continuing support for the Iraqi people in their political transition and reaffirms the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

"Underlining the importance of the maximum possible participation of all components of Iraqi society in the political process, the Security Council stresses the need for sustained political efforts aimed at making the next steps of the transition, in particular the coming constitutional process, as inclusive, participatory and transparent as possible. The Council welcomes the statements recently made by Iraqi leaders in this regard, and strongly encourages the Transitional Government of Iraq and the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq to reach out broadly to all segments of Iraqi society, with a view to promote genuine political dialogue and national reconciliation and to ensure that all Iraqis are duly represented and have a voice in the political process and the drafting of the Iraqi Constitution.

"The Security Council reaffirms the leading role of the SRSG and UNAMI in UNSCR 1546 in support of Iraq's own efforts and as requested by the Government of Iraq, to promote national dialogue and consensus building on the drafting of a national constitution. In this regard, the Security Council urges the UN to prepare itself rapidly and encourages the members of the international community to provide advisers and technical support to the UN to help it fulfil this role.

"The Security Council condemns, in the strongest possible terms, acts of terrorism in Iraq, which should not be allowed to disrupt Iraq's political and economic transition. The Security Council calls on those who use violence in an attempt to subvert the political process to lay down their arms and participate in the political process. It encourages the Iraqi authorities to engage with all those who renounce violence and to create a political atmosphere conducive to national reconciliation and political competition through peaceful means.

"The Security Council stresses the continued importance of Iraq's neighbouring countries and regional organizations in supporting the political process, cooperating with the Iraqi authorities to control transit across Iraq's borders and extending other support for the people of Iraq in their efforts to achieve security and prosperity.

"Consistent with UNSCR 1546, the Security Council reaffirms its support for a federal, democratic, pluralist and unified Iraq, in which there is full respect for human rights. It welcomes the international community's support to Iraq and underlines the importance of enhanced and expeditious assistance from all States and relevant international organizations in support of Iraq's further implementation of the political transition process and efforts to achieve national reconciliation, economic reconstruction, and stability, in accordance with UNSCR 1546."